

# House Select Committee on Homeland Security Democrats

**JIM TURNER, Ranking Member**

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## **TURNER CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE DEPLOYMENT OF EFFECTIVE RADIATION DETECTORS AT ALL SEAPORTS AND LAND BORDER POINTS OF ENTRY**

Following the release of a Department of Homeland Security Inspector General investigation demonstrating severe weaknesses in the Department of Homeland Security's system to prevent nuclear materials from being smuggled into the United States in a cargo container, Congressman Jim Turner, Ranking Member, House Select Committee on Homeland Security, called for the immediate deployment of effective radiation detectors at all seaports and land ports of entry.

These detectors – called “radiation portal monitors” – are used to screen cargo containers unloaded from ships, attached to trucks, or on rail cars.

**“The greatest threat to America is a nuclear device in the hands of a terrorist. Al Qaeda has publicly declared its intent to acquire one. Nonetheless, the Administration is not moving quickly enough to deploy sufficient radiation portal monitors to make America safe from this very real threat,” said Turner.**

The Department of Homeland Security began deploying radiation portal monitors at land ports of entry in 2003 and at seaports in 2004. It intends to install them at rail hubs and air cargo facilities as well.

The program has stalled, however, due to lack of funding. At the end of fiscal year 2004, \$290 million was needed to complete the program. However, the Administration's fiscal year 2005 budget only requested \$43 million. The House Appropriations Committee commented on the inadequacy of the budget, stating “The President's request includes an additional 165 RPMs, the Committee is aware of the need for over 1,000 more.”

The Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act for Fiscal Year 2005, passed last week by Congress, provided up to \$80 for radiation portal monitors, leaving a shortfall of \$210 million to complete installation of the devices at all ports of entry and rail hubs. In July, House Republicans prohibited Turner from offering an amendment to fully fund the program so it could be completed this fiscal year.

**“Leaving this security gap wide open, when the technology is available, and the cost is not great, is inexcusable,” said Turner.**

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